

Statement of Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones, 11th District, Ohio
Hearing on USA PATRIOT Act/Terrorist Financing
Thursday, September 19, 2002

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member LaFalce, Colleagues, and Guests;

No one here will forget the glorious September day that was suddenly transformed into a scene of unfathomable chaos as thousands of lives were violently taken from us right before our eyes. Our government responded quickly and righteously to this horror. Military forces mobilized to root out the base elements of terrorist organizations in Central Asia, Congress and the President passed sweeping legislation to weaken the ability of terrorists seeking to commit further atrocities on our homeland, and a new wave of international cooperation evolved with the singular goal of fighting terrorism throughout the world.

But just as certain as the need to act swiftly after September 11th was apparent, the need to act wisely as we continue what will be a long fight against terrorism is equally apparent. Our fight against terrorism is being made, and will continue to be made on many fronts-- diplomatically, militarily, and financially. No one doubts the destabilizing effect that cutting off their funding will have on the ability of terrorists to commit their heinous activities here and abroad. But as we move forward in our efforts to stop terrorism in its early stages, we must never forget the fundamental principles our nation is founded upon. There is truth in the old maxim "Desperate times call for desperate measures," but we should never allow our vision of defense and protection to become myopic and ignore the tenets of freedom we fought so hard to attain.

The purpose of these hearings, to evaluate the progress we have made with regard to cutting off terrorist financing, are an example of how our government has acted wisely since September 11th. By ensuring cooperative and comprehensive reviews of these new laws between members of the Executive and Legislative branches will ensure that the steps we take to combat terrorism will be aggressive yet responsible.

I am honored and humbled to sit among these distinguished guests and colleagues as we consider how to balance our cherished liberties with maintaining a keen sense of vigilance against future threats. Though our paths may sometimes take different routes, we certainly have the same high road in sight. I am confident that these hearings will speed our union on that high road.

Director Mueller, Deputy Secretary Dam, Under Secretary Larson, I thank you for your appearance here today.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for my time.